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SONGS IN EXILE
&
OTHER POEMS



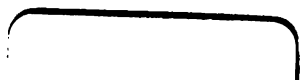
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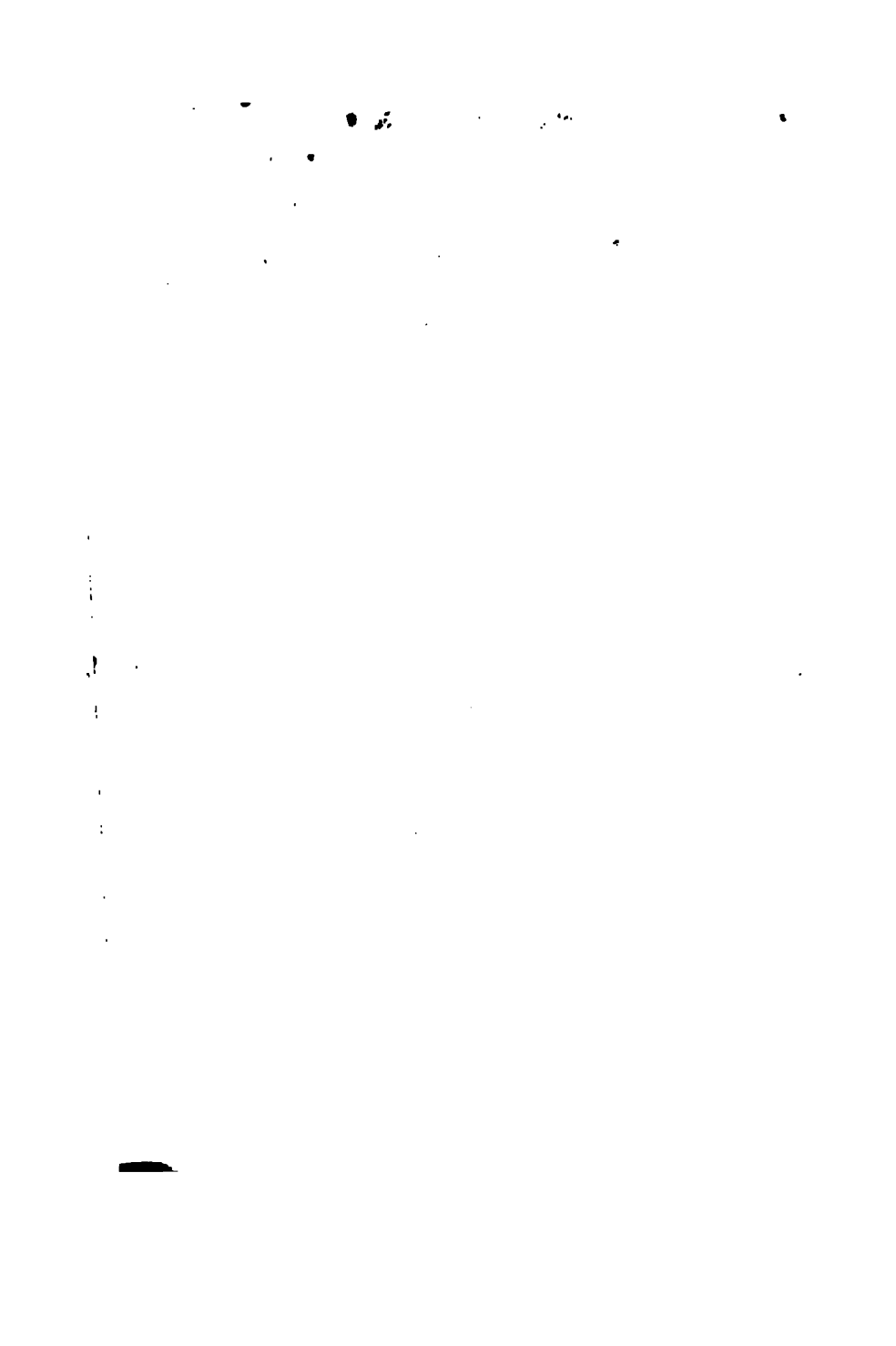




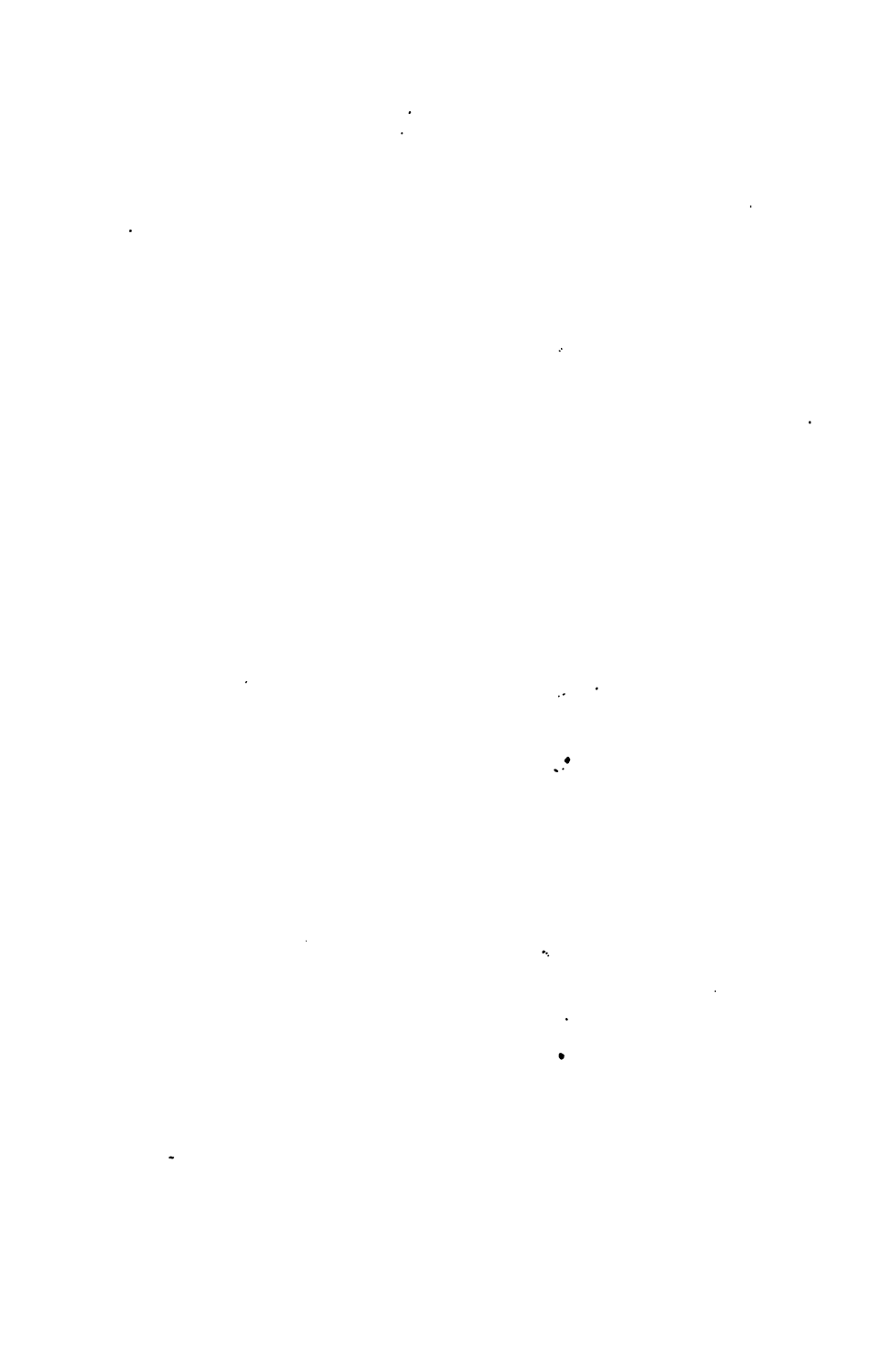
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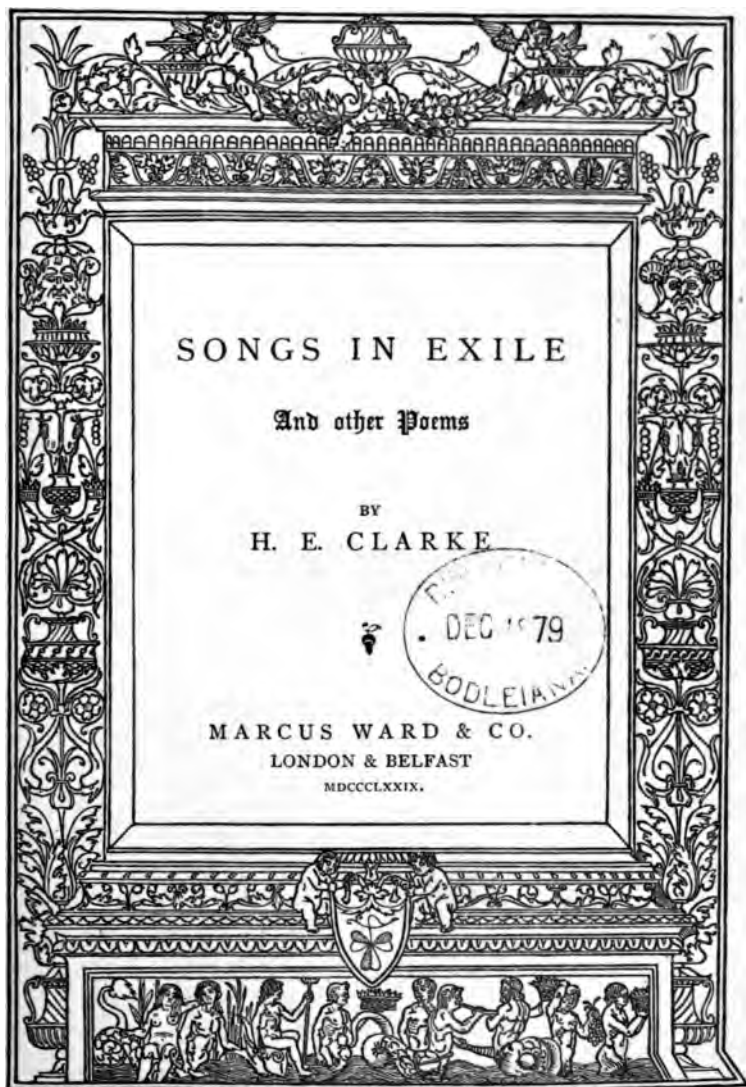






SONGS IN EXILE





*I know that all beneath the moon decays,
And what by mortals in this world is brought
In Time's great periods shall return to nought ;
That fairest states have fatal nights and days.
I know that all the Muses' heavenly lays,
With toil of sprite which are so dearly bought,
As idle sounds, of few or none are sought ;
That there is nothing lighter than vain praise.
I know frail Beauty's like the purple flower,
To which one morn oft birth and death affords ;
That Love a jarring is of minds' accords,
Where sense and will bring under reason's power :
Know what I list, this all can not me move,
But that, alas, I both must write and love.*

W. DRUMMOND.

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SONGS IN EXILE.

PROLOGUE.



SANG, and my song was of Death,
In a horrible starless night,
With face grown haggard and white,
With strangled, struggling breath,
Unheard in the storm's fierce roar,
In the elements' raging fight,
And the cry of the maddened sea ;
Deeming day for ever was o'er,
And morning no more should be.

Yet over the wind-blown hill,
And over the foam-white sea,
Fearless and fair and free,
With footsteps airy and still,
Morning, the maiden, came,
With a kiss and a smile for me,
And a word in her lips of love,

And my soul at her face took flame,
As the heavens took flame above ;

And the song that I sang was of Life ;
Life that is glad in the sun,
And mourns not the undone and done ;
The glorious glow of its strife,
Its laughter and longing and tears,
Its battle that never is won,
Its love and its hate and its lust ;
Life making mirth of the years
That tread it to death in the dust.

But e'en as I sang, in mid-song
Came a change o'er the tune and the lay,
And the wild notes and loud died away,
And over my soul sweet and strong
Swept the spell of Youth's mightiest Lord ;
And I bowed to the earth at his sway,
Owning my Ruler and King,
And then at the sound of his word
I arose in his praises to sing.

And the song in my lips was of Love,
Love that shall ever endure,
Perfect, passionate, pure,
High as the heavens above,
Free from all earthly stain,

Deep in the soul and sure,—
Love that shall fade not nor fall,
Love that for ever shall reign,
Love that is monarch of all.

Full many a song I sang,
And my soul went out in my rhyme,
And my blood to the tune kept time,
And my brain with the music rang,
Till, in an evil hour,
Sounded a changeful chime,
A note rang hollow and thin,—
And I said, Decayed is his power,
And I find no pleasure therein.

Is he no earthly King?—
Yea, for his crown is of gold,—
Yea, for he groweth old ;—
Shall one in his praises sing
When he is palsied and gray,
And the blood in his veins is cold,
And the strength in his arms no more?
As an earthly king for a day
He rules, and his reign is o'er.

And I sang of Freedom and Change,
And the breaking of bonds that enthrall
Now the poor life of men all,—
Cattle forbidden to range,

Save where the herdsmen guide!
Compass'd of moat and of wall,
Shackled of Custom and Fear!
Throw open the prison wide,
Break me the manacles here,—

Hurl down the walls on an heap,
Set up the banner of red!
Our trumpets shall waken the dead
From the depth of their clay-cold sleep
To behold the deeds that are done:—
No crown on any man's head,
On no man's limbs any chain,—
One nation beneath the sun,
And Freedom its monarch to reign!

Nay,—but I know not, I,—
Whether these things shall be;—
If ever a man shall see
The dawn of that day in the sky.
Often my hope burns low,
And the stars of the morning flee,—
Yet I sing betimes as I may,
Saying, The night is for woe,
Joy shall come with the day.

And when faith in the future fails,
I turn from the dwellings of men,

And flee to moorland and fen,
To desolate mountains and dales,
To river, and lake, and mere,
With the oat instead of the pen,
And pipe to the spirits that dwell
Where the cataracts stun the ear,
And the winds in their cavern yell.

These while we live are ours,—
The gracious gifts of the earth,
The wonders of spring-time's birth,
The glory of summer's flowers,
The riches of autumn's gold,—
And these alone are of worth ;
I will sing no more of the dead,—
Of corpses buried and cold,
Of phantoms faded and fled.

We will go together, O Wind,
To the lonely places afar,
Where none of man's kindred are :
Free, fearless, and unconfined,
Wind, I will sing with you there
To God and the morning star :
Give me thy voice's might,—
Let me sing to the free fresh air,—
Let me sing to the morning light !

Here I am bound with a chain,—
I see not my heart's desire,
And my heart is a burning fire,
And my body of rest is fain ;—
But the mill of the world grinds still,
The mill that never shall tire,—
And man is a little thing ;—
Yet whatever the gods may will,
While I have voice I shall sing.

These be the songs I have sung,
To sound of the lover's lute,
To trumpet or tender flute,
Or bugles for battle that rung ;
These be all I can bring,—
Here is my life's whole fruit,—
The golden grains in its sand,—
And yet for a little I sing
As I pass to the Songless Land.



THE STAR-GAZER.

SPEAK,—or no more I follow at thy will,—
I who have followed thee through life thus far :—
Shadow or substance art thou ?—good or ill ?—
Will-o'-the-wisp or star ?

I have followed thee through night and storm and rain,
Over the mountains and across the sea,—
Now I will cease, nor follow thee again,
Until thou answer me.

Thou hast been ever glimmering in my sky
Since my first sun rose till this later day,
Now bright, now dim, now low, now soaring high,—
But leading still away.

Thou hast led me from the rose-hung paths of Love,
Through thorny ways and rough, where no flower
grows ;
Thy pallid light upon the boughs above,
Instead of Love's fair rose.

I hear the merry laughs of youth and maid,
And there are fairy forms that haunt my dreams;
Dryads are dancing in a moonlit glade,
And oft by haunted streams

I see the water-nymphs the reeds among;
Lo, the white arms—the bright bewitching eyes,—
The strained throats, throbbing with the pulse of song,—
The breasts that fall and rise.

I go—I leave thy lonely ways and thee!
Youth fleets away, brim high Life's glorious bowl,—
Fling far the rein, let Passion hurry me
Like cloud from pole to pole.

I would taste all, the bitter and the sweet,
The sleepy poison and the maddening wine,
Delight's fierce philter, bubbling o'er with heat,
And Sorrow's cooling brine.

I go to join the Dryads in their dance,
The Naiads and the Satyrs where they lie,
Seeking, like some knight errant of Romance,
Love and adventures high.

But as I press across the haunted meads,
To thy pale glow the magic moonlight fades;
The nymphs have vanished from the rustling reeds,
The Dryads from the glades.

Out of high heaven the very moon has gone ;

I only see bare fields and empty skies,
And thee, thou juggler, ever leading on
Before my cheated eyes.

And ever thus thou wear'st my life away ;

Because of thee I know nor joy nor ease,
And in my youth I bear a heart grown gray
For lack of rest and peace.

Thou hast set thy sign upon me,—yea, a blight.

Thou tak'st away love, lover, faith, and friend ;
Thou giv'st, instead, nought save thy sickly light,
And dreams that have no end.

Thou hast slain thy thousands since the world began ;

Gazing on thee they fell in graves unseen,—
Immortal fame they longed for ; now no man
Knows more than *such have been*.

Wilt thou slay me too ? Yea, I think thou wilt.

Though I rebel, I know thou art too strong ;
I shall follow yet, till life's poor dregs be spilt,
Singing an unheard song.

Fooling myself some while with dreams of fame,

Cursing myself more oft for following thee ;
Now nearly hopeful, now heartsick with shame,
Always in agony.

Till I shall see the laurel gleaming green :—

Cry out, *The goal is near—the crown is won !*
And down the open grave that gapes between,
Fall, and my pain be done.

On—on—still on ! The way is dark o'erhead,—

Send me in token of thy truth one beam,
Let but a ray upon my path be shed,
To show I do not dream.

That I may give these scoffers all the lie,

That I may clear my faint heart of mistrust,
And find one faith beneath the barren sky
That turns not all to dust.

Yet if thou wilt not, I must after still ;

I cannot turn, having followed thee so far,
Whate'er thou art,—shade, substance, good, or ill,—
Will-o'-the-wisp or star !



THANKSGIVING.

"Souls of Poets dead and gone."

LORDS of my love, great Dead who live for ever,
Whose mighty brows with deathless bays are
bound,—

O ye who fearless passed the Stygian river,
As Kings who went in glory to be crowned,—
Now, if my weak and faltering voice can reach you,

Whose glorious voices ever haunt mine ears,

Let me unload my heart. Past blame ye are
And above praise,—yet hear me, I beseech you,

Who follow your great footprints thro' the years

With toilsome steps, and worship you from far.

Being dead, ye speak in trumpet-tones to me,

Perchance my voice may soar to where ye be.

If not, my heart shall find relief in singing

From the deep gratitude that doth oppress,

And rest what time the measured rhymes are ringing,

From the dull thought of its unworthiness.

O ye in heaven and earth alike immortal,—
Whose souls fire souls alike of quick and dead—
Who passed from us to commune with your peers,—
I stand a beggar at your glorious portal,
Weighed down with gifts, on meats delightful fed,
Whose thanks are drowned by his grateful tears ;
Nor health nor hope nor happiness was mine,
Yet ye have made my maimèd life divine.

Love hath fled from me like a thing affrighted,
Of all that men desire my life hath failed ;
By fame unvisited,—by faith unlighted,—
By storms of passion and of doubt assailed,—
O ye have been my refuge and my haven,
Where waves were quiet and where storms were
stayed,
And the world's ravings in sweet music died ;
And in my memory's hardest marble graven
Lies the deep writing that your thoughts have made,
Never to be effaced by time or tide,
Till Death, that takes the happy, take me too :—
Then, if the soul lives, mine is shaped by you.

I give you thanks, O mighty sons of morning,
I, heir to darkness, hail you and give praise ;
I have felt the bitterness of hard men's scorning,
The loneliness of unregarded days ;

The spirit's isolation, and the yearning
For a human soul to love and understand—
The despair at seeing all go by;
But from this race of wealth there is no turning,
And those who love me wave a hasty hand,
And scarcely smile as past my place they fly,
And those who scorn,—the high, the rich, the strong,—
Cry, Follow, foolish slave, and cease thy song.

They have chained me to the chariot of their idol,
I shall perish in the end beneath its wheel;
They have gagged me with a bit and with a bridle,
And at their altar they have made me kneel;
But my soul hath kept its adoration,
My spirit to their Moloch hath not bowed,
My heart unto its polar star is true;
I have not worshipped Mammon with the nation,
But forced before his footstool by the crowd,
My soul, O godlike ones, hath been with you;
And in that hour I, buffeted and bound,
Have seen you gaze from heaven calm and crowned,
And felt the lash no more,—forgot the fetter,
And the taskmaster with his damned cry,
And the dull fools who chant for aye, *'Tis better*
To eat, and drink, and laugh, and sleep, and die,
Than thus to wear life out and gain no guerdon,
To think, to dream in sorrow and unrest,

And hearken evermore unto the Dead :—

*Who shout, Come, drink, and so cast off thy burden;
Lo, Amaryllis hath a swelling breast,*

*And see the sunshine on Neera's head;
Bow to our god, and live, and have all these,
And double-chinned content and plenteous ease.*

I shall not feel one stray beam of your glory,
I shall enter not nor see you where ye are;
My life shall pass away an unremembered story,
My brow is bare of laurel and of star.
What might have been I know not, none may know it;
What is 'twere vain to weep and wail o'er now,—
My thanks should not be hindered by my tears,—
Yet, ah, to find among you some great gentle Poet,
With the ever-living laurel round his brow,—
That I could pour my tale into his ears.
But tho' ye speak for ever unto me,
My voice shall never reach you where ye be.

Ye who rest now for ever unforgotten,
And watch the seeds ye planted wax and grow,
While thrones and empires crumble, faiths fall rotten,
And dynasties like shadows come and go;
How should ye hear me from the dark depths singing
Stray snatches of sad song between my sighs,
'Mid ruined palaces and fallen fanes,
While like a bell the utter void is ringing

With bitter groans and with despairing cries,
That turn the blood to water in my veins,—
Till like a stricken lark from storm-black skies
Wind-whirled, my weak song flutters, falls, and dies.

With us is toil and trouble and wild weather,
The days of longing and the nights of fire,
And children crying out for food together,
And women weeping for their hearts' desire ;
And miserable cares and woes unworthy,
Free hand and generous heart have passed away,
Our hearts can feel but our own paltry wrongs,—
Our hands with gathering the gold are earthy,—
Hang up the harps—we can no longer play,—
How should we sing again the olden songs?
For now aloof and lone we singers stand,
As strangers in a strange and sordid land.

Of praise, of peace, of all they have bereft us,
The whirr of wheels has drowned our music now ;
But still remains the glory ye have left us,
A halo round the student's pallid brow.
Still in our ears your glorious songs are ringing,
And still your souls above us shine like stars,
Seen by the faithful few who watch night-long,
And who at morning time shall meet you singing,
As heaven's portal at God's word unbars
The liberated world's triumphal song.

O fair wan cheeks, O happy weary eyes,
Ye shall forget the night when day doth rise.

Therefore bear ye this season of short sorrow,
And be ye glad, tho' cursed and scorned of men ;
Ye who weep now shall laugh upon the morrow,
Ye who are cursèd shall have blessing then.
And praise ye with a voice of great thanksgiving
The glorious ones whose spirits light your way,
Keep pure their faith, and hold ye fast thereby ;
For these alone of all the Dead are living,
And only theirs the crowns that last for aye,
And theirs the faith that shall not fade or die.
With one accord, and with one mighty voice,
Praise and give thanks, and worship and rejoice.

Lo, when your day dawns I shall lie forgotten,
Hear not the joyous song nor see the light,
But happier sons of happier sires begotten
Shall be and lack not hearing neither sight ;
But I, whose life is brief and early ended,
For that brief life's more brief delight and rest,
Do praise you always, and praise only you ;
With moons and stars ye made the midnight splendid,
With comfort stayed my soul, with counsel blest,
Content and courage gave my whole life thro' ;
Wherefore these withered, worthless flowers I bring,
Who have nought better for thank-offering.

ON THE EMBANKMENT.

UNDER the mist and the moonlight I wander alone
along,

Between the hum of the city and the river's soothing
song,

And the wind that blows from the water is keen like
a sword and strong.

I love to roam by the river in the gray of the winter
nights,

Till I seem to be nought but a shadow among the
shadowy sights,

Above and below and around me a dazzling tangle of
lights—

Lights that glow in the water, lights that burn in the
sky,

Lights that twinkle and change, lights that flicker and
fly ;

And the great moon over them all, ruling supreme on
high,

Clothed by the shining mist with a wedding-garment of
white ;
And the tide of the Thames to left, and the city's tide
to right,
Run swiftly out in the dimness, filling the ear of the
night

With a musical mingled murmur that wakes in my
dreaming brain
Thoughts that are sad for pleasure, and yet too soothing
for pain,
And steals 'twixt the thoughts awakened like a far-off
song's refrain.

There is passion and pain and sorrow, there is hope
and rest and ease,
And labour, with Love for guerdon, in the mingling
melodies,
And my vague unrest is quiet, and I am content and
at peace.

O toiling brothers and sisters,—O moon, O stars, O
night,—
O rapid and restless river,—O mist of the midnight
white,—
O colour and sound and silence,—O darkness and O
light,—

I am glad of you, one with you, part of you—an atom
of all am I,—

One with the mist and the river, and the courtesan
strolling by,

And one with the great white moon in the solemn
and splendid sky.

A glimpse of the dream's fulfilment or ever the dream
is done?

That the little imperfect lives we may-flies live in the
sun

Shall be gathered at last together and woven for ever
in one?

One that is all-sufficing where nothing of self can be,
And the strifes and struggles are ended, unravelled the
mystery,

Yea, all is so very plain that we do not need to see?

Nought that is clean or unclean, nought that is low or
high,

Nought that is evil or good, and nought that can
change or die,—

Nought that is other than me, yet nought any more
that is I.

A SPRING CHORUS.

AFTER her long sleep, by thy sweet kiss broken,
Nature does now arise,
A crown of gold upon her brows for token,
And sunlight in her eyes,
And on her lips a smile for thee
That wakes an answering smile on land and sea.

In the glad meadows violets are springing,
Tossed and half drowned in blithe and blowing grass,
That laughs to feel thy feet, and birds are singing
A joyful welcome as they hear thee pass,
And the wind woos thee and caresses,
And smells thereafter of thy odorous tresses.

And at thy advent the great sea rejoices ;
The thunder of his welcome shakes the shore ;
And everywhere the rivers lift their voices,
Made free once more.
Even men's sad hearts within their bosoms sing
To greet thee, Spring.

Take us with thee, O glad and winsome maiden,
And let us go,—
Our hearts are weary now and heavy laden
With worldly woe,—
Now from life's dusty battle let us flee
Away with thee.

Thou hast somewhere a cool and shady dwelling,
Where ferns uncurl and darker ivies climb ;
From fairy fountains, water ever welling
Fills all the air with liquid-rippling rhyme.
The bright light crocus and the snowdrop timid,
Bold daisies gazing ever on the sky,
And golden cups with dewy nectar brimmèd,
About thy palace floor in myriads lie.
With new-waked life the busy air is teeming,
Flits the gay butterfly and hums the bee ;
In fitful sunlight the moist rocks are gleaming,
There comes a murmur of the distant sea.
Delicate tapestry the walls doth cover,
Of gossamer the fairies weave at morn ;
Here thou dost woo the youthful year, thy lover,—
Here the flower-goddess does thy brows adorn,
And here thy nymphs upon soft moss are lying,
Shadow and sunshine o'er their bright limbs cast,
As up above the snow-white clouds go flying
Before a wanton wind that follows fast.

From out the murky midmost of the city,
Where scarce thy face is seen, we cry to thee,
O flower-crowned maiden-goddess, of thy pity
To set us free.

Lo last year's hopes, like last year's fruits, are rotten,
Or past away,—
And last year's loves and leaves alike forgotten,
And last year's May ;—
New hopes are born, new leaves, new loves are springing,
May comes again,
And with the birds at sight of her are singing
The hearts of men.

Flash out, O Sun, in splendour,
Roll on, O tide of Spring,
Whereon, like foam, the tender
White May is blossoming ;

Thy goddess on thy bosom
Is wafted to the strand ;
With bird and bud and blossom
Fill all the laughing land.

The woodland ways and alleys
Thy coming decked to greet,
And all the hills and valleys
On fire before thy feet.

Dryads and fauns go reeling
The joyous ways along,
With cymbal clash and pealing
Of laughter and of song.

Silenus shakes with laughter,
And Bacchus, young and fair,
By panthers drawn, comes after,
With ivy-crownèd hair.

Near the wild train we hover,
But silent for a space,
Until our eyes discover
Thy glorious form and face;—

Then the leaf-arches under,
While flowers fall thick as spray,
As swells the song in thunder,
We follow thee away.



A REBEL MARCH.

COOL now and steady, boys!
Quiet and still!

Let not a sword clank or bridle-rein ring :—

Keep your guns ready, boys,

March with a will :—

Live the Republic! Death to the King!

Under your breath, boys,

Let it be said,

Ere the last stroke of midnight his soul shall take wing

To the Kingdom of Death, boys,

To reign o'er the Dead!—

Live the Republic! Death to the King!

Darkness close o'er us!

Heaven be blind!

Clouds round the pallid moon gather and cling!

The Devil's before us,—

The deep sea behind!—

Live the Republic! Death to the King!

See you a light glowing
Far in the sky?
To-night, in the palace, carouse they and sing.
(How the wind's blowing!
Hark to its cry,—
Live the Republic! Death to the King!)

No faint-hearted treble,—
A full-throated roar.
Like the cry of a beast ere he crouches to spring:—
Wind,—you good Rebel!—
We love you the more!—
Live the Republic! Death to the King!

An eagle's nest scale we,
Well-guarded and high,
Yet down from his eyrie the eagle we'll fling!—
But win we or fail we,
Live we or die,—
Live the Republic! Death to the King!

Slaves now no longer,
Equal and free,
Gods! what a help to the banquet we'll bring!
Appetites stronger
Than courtiers' can be!
Live the Republic! Death to the King!

Hush, we are near them !

Guards at the gate,—

Vile foreign hirelings, our land's curse and sting :—

Sweet 'tis to hear them

March to their fate !

Live the Republic ! Death to the King !

Cool now and steady, boys !

Quiet and still

One moment more, and then make the air ring !

Now your guns ready, boys !—

Shout with a will—

Live the Republic ! Death to the King !



T W O G R A V E S .

I N lonely desert lands he lies ;
There is no love-light in his eyes,
But he lies low, afar, alone.
The desert sand is in his hair,
And round him blazing, blind and bare,
The level waste, untrod, unknown.

Sometimes there rings at dead midnight
A wild beast's cry of pain or fright ;
Sometimes a bird screams overhead ;—
Save these, a silence dread always,—
Blue sky,—bright sand,—the fierce sun's blaze
Above him lying calm and dead.

Where in the tall elms sobs the breeze,
With mournful sound as of sad seas,
In the old church's silent shade,
A changeful English sky above,
Lies she who was in life his love,
Whose heart went with him where he strayed.

The nightingale trills music here,
Or in the dying of the year
 The red-breast whistles in the snow;
And oft above the mound there swells
The mighty chorus of the bells,
 To soothe her soul where she lies low.

One grave is golden, one is green,—
And alway thunders loud between
 The mournful music of the sea;
On one grave hands strew flowers,—on one
Blazes the pitiless red sun,—
 And they were lovers, he and she.

Their hands were clasped in days gone by,
Lips moved on lips, and eye met eye,
 And these two knew they were not twain;
Those eyes are darkened now, those hands
Moulder in separate climes and lands,—
 Those lips shall never meet again.

Shall any say their love is dead,
Because o'er each fair youthful head
 Hath closed the portal of the grave?
Because one lies 'neath burning sand,
The other 'neath green English land,
 And 'twixt them alway rolls the wave?

If these two rested, side by side,
Beneath one sod, bridegroom and bride,
Then were they not more near than now.
Love is no thrall of Fate and Death ;
He builds, destroys, and vanquisheth,—
Before him Death and Fate must bow.

Far up in fairy realms of flowers,
Where buds make sweet the laughing hours,
These, that no Fate can now divide,—
No pain can touch,—no sorrow scar,—
Wander from golden star to star,
Hand locked in hand, and side by side.

Their love hath nought of this world's stain ;
They shall not part or weep again ;
Their life-long fight is past and done ;
All their work ended, and they rest ;
On each fair face, in each pure breast,
Bright glows the peace their life hath won.

Better their lot than ours, who here
Live 'mid mistrust and doubt and fear,
And hopes that fail, and loves that die ;
And yet, if we be true as they,
When Life's fierce storm has passed away,
Its pain has ceased,—its strife gone by,—

Then even as theirs our love shall be ;—
Rescued from Death,—from Fate set free,—
 Made pure of this world's stain and wrong ;—
Farewells shall sigh not in our ears,
But with the music of the spheres
 Shall mingle Love's eternal song.



AFTER MANY DAYS.

UNDER the trees in the meadow, where the silvery
moonbeams shine,
Once more, after years of parting, I feel your hand
nestle in mine ;

And still is the summer night, and bright is the moon
o'erhead,
While below the grass is gleaming like a sea when
winds are dead.

The nightingale's song swells sweet from the heart of
the shadowy trees,
Like the voice of a spirit explaining Love's manifold
mysteries.

Our souls are one with his song, and one with each
other this night,
Under the trees in the meadow, in the peaceful even-
light.

Ah, many a change has been since we stood together
last

Under these murmurous trees, on a summer night long
past !

I have travelled the frozen North, I have fainted
beneath the sun

Of the fiery South since then ; but my wanderings now
are done.

Riches and honour and glory I gained in those far-off
lands,

And gained for this thing only, to give them into
your hands.

Riches and honour and glory fled from me and passed
away ;

And I came back empty-handed as on our parting day.

Did you greet me a whit less warmly because I had
failed in the strife ?

Because the splendour I strove for had wrecked and
ruined my life ?

Ah, the nightingale knows, you see ! Hark to his
singing now !

He is telling the listening stars how well you kept
your vow.

I have journeyed in lands afar, whose maidens men
say are most fair,
With cheeks like delicate roses, and glorious eyes and
hair ;—

Where the trees are vocal with birds, and the air is
alive with wings ;—
Where Love is bought and sold, and the nightingale
never sings :—

And as to their gaudy birds was the lovelier bird of
night,
So to their fairest maidens were you in my weary
sight.

I never feared you would change,—I knew, whatever
should be,
I should find you patiently waiting, watching and
longing for me.

And I found you here in the meadow, alone with the
nightingale ;
A little graver maybe, and with cheeks a little more pale ;

But the same bright smile as of yore, and the olden
fire in your eye,
And a voice as musical still as it was in the days
gone by.

I know I shall meet my doom to-day.
O God, to kiss her once more, and say,
"I am going a long and darksome way ;
Remember me when I am gone.

"Think of me a little, my lady sweet,
When this heart that loves you has ceased to beat ;
Aye, pray to heaven that we may meet
Again in that Land above,
That the priests have told us there is on high ;
Where tears are wiped from each weeping eye,
And Death alone of all things shall die
In the perfect day of love !"

Strike spurs,—shake bridles, ride faster all !
Fill up the places of those who fall !—
Shoulder to shoulder, a living wall,
At a gallop on we fly ;
Black with smoke is the sulphurous air ;
But ever before me, pallid and fair,
Is a tearful maiden with golden hair,
Who waves me a last good-bye.

IN THE WOOD.

THROUGH laughing leaves the sunlight comes,
Turning the green to gold ;
The bee about the heather hums,
And the morning air is cold
Here on the breezy woodland side,
Where we two ride.

Through laughing leaves on golden hair
The sunlight glances down,
And makes a halo round her there,
And crowns her with a crown
Queen of the sunrise and the sun,
As we ride on.

The wanton wind has kissed her face,—
His lips have left a rose,—
He found her cheek so sweet a place
For kisses, I suppose,—
He thought he'd leave a sign, that so
Others might know.

"FOR THE NIGHT COMETH."

O YOUTH, grasp pleasure while youth yet is thine!—
For the night cometh that shall end it all ;

Rid night of kisses and the day of wine,
And turn delight to bitterness and gall.

And when upon thine eyes that night shall fall,
Thy strength shall fail thee, and thy pride and lust,

And thou shalt taste in all things, for a sign,
The bitter savour of the grave's dull dust.

The laughing lips shall turn to thee no more,

Nor glory of great beauty tempt thee then ;

Nor wine delight thee as it did before,

Nor tender music soothe thy soul again.

Thou shalt be as a shadow among men,

And none shall heed thee, they shall all pass by ;

Did'st thou have pleasure in the days of yore ?—

For the night cometh, thou shalt surely die !

For the night cometh : yea, the shadows close

Darker and darker over thy bowed head ;

Here is the end of pleasures and of woes,—

The end of sorrow and desire and dread.

Sleep soundly thou with all the dreamless dead !
For the night is for sleep and rest from pain ;
Perchance thou shalt at last find sweet repose,
And peace whereof thy weary soul was fain.

O youth, grasp pleasure, for the day is brief,
And the night long that follows after it !
And age is bitter with despair and grief ;—
Grasp it while it can yield thee any sweet,
Or dull thy memory a single whit,
Or turn thee from the sorrow of the past ;
For after it shall bring thee no relief,—
When the night cometh, that shall come at last.

In that night shall we rest ? shall we have sleep ?
Shall we have done with joy and tears and strife ?
Ah, sweet is slumber unto eyes that weep,
And dreamless death is more than fevered life.
Here the sad air with clamorous cries is rife :
There is none hears,—there is none recks hereof ;—
But the night cometh, may we slumber deep,
May all we rest from barren life and love.

A G E.

ALL the strong spells of Passion slowly breaking,
 Its chains undone ;
A troubled sleep that dreams to peaceful waking,
 A haven won.

A fire burnt out unto the last dead ember,
 Left black and cold ;
A fiery August unto still September
 Yielding her gold.

A dawn serene the windy midnight over,
 The darkness past ;
Now, with no clouds nor mists her face to cover,
 The Day at last.

Thou hast thy prayed-for peace, O soul, and quiet
 From storm and strife ;—
Now yearn for ever for the noise and riot
 That made thy Life.

A SONG IN EXILE.

HOW should I sing in this strange land
Where thou art not, but I,
A stranger among strangers, stand,
And as the days pass by,
Kiss not thy lips, press not thy hand,
But only dream and sigh?

Do not the olden measures bring
Old pleasures back like pain?—
Does not a bitter Farewell ring
Through all songs in my brain?—
'Tis winter now;—I will not sing
Till the birds come again.

Winter it is;—the sun is cold,
The sky is sad with cloud;
The city in a fog is rolled,
As in a stained shroud;
And in mine ears, for songs of old,
The city's heart beats loud.

The snow lies spotless where thou art ;
Great fields stretch white and still ;—
O'er meadows pure as thine own heart
Thine eye may rove at will.
Here, in the world's polluted mart,
All Nature suffers ill.

The snow is stained before it falls
By the smoke-blackened air ;
In crowded streets, 'twixt prisoning walls,
What can be pure or fair ?—
For space and light my spirit calls,
And no god hears my prayer.

How should I sing ?—I can but dream
Of olden days and thee ;—
I hear the roar of wheels, the stream
Of busy men I see ;—
I see and hear, but all things seem
A dim dream unto me.

Thou art not in the noisy street,
As through the crowd I go ;—
'Neath myriad eager trampling feet
Is pashed the foul 'soft snow ;—
But in the hundreds that I meet
Is no soul that I know.

'Mongst all the faces is not thine,
Yet oftentimes I see,
In some stray ray of bleak sunshine,
A message sent from thee ;—
Each face smiles forth a smile divine,
For thy love's sake, on me.

Ah, bitter wakening !—thoughts that seem
To soothe, more deep to sting !
The roar of wheels,—the hurrying stream !—
Ah, God, the wakening !
The sun dies out,—dies out the dream !—
Ah, Love ! how should I sing ?



A MESSAGE.

I AM not near to shield thee, Sweet, from harm ;
I cannot hold thee now within mine arm,
Nor comfort thee with telling of my love ;—
Yet if there be a God at all above,
He shall be with thee,—He shall shield thee, dear,
Although I am not near.

I that know not if any God there is,
But am of doubtful heart,—I doubt not this ;—
If God or Heaven or Hope at all there be,
Soul of my soul, they all shall comfort thee.
Hope, Heaven, and God shall be with thee, my dear,
Although I am not near.

For me, who groped so long in hopeless Night,
Till dawned upon me thy pure love's strong light,—
Mine eyes are dazzled at the sudden sun,
And see no light, no hope in life, save one.
That light, that hope, is thy sweet love alone,
My dawn, my sun, mine own.

Though we are parted, we shall meet again ;
An end there is of parting and of pain :
Let us believe it. Here on earth it seems
We are but dreamers dreaming dim strange dreams,
And the soul drifts an aimless, sad, strange way,
Rudderless and astray,

Till Love's star rises o'er the stormy sea,
And shows the castaway where dawn shall be,
And guides him, creedless and untaught of priest,
Unto the glorious sunrise of the East ;—
Opes for him heaven's gate,—pierces the sky ;—
Shall he see God and die ?

Nay,—seeing Love, he liveth ever more ;
Liveth again, though he were dead before ;—
God, Love, and Light, and Truth, are these not one ?—
Lo, I believe, and my soul sees the sun.—
Now know I thou art not alone, my dear,
Although I am not near.

Nay, not alone, nor helpless in distress,
Nor lonely quite, nor all companionless ;
Though I can shield thee not from pain or harm,
Thou art encircled by a God's strong arm ;
And thou art safe within that arm, my dear,
Although I am not near.

FROM EXILE.

I LOVE you with all my soul ;—

It is all I can do, my dear.
Storms gather, and death-bells toll,
Hopes flicker in winds that veer ;

Day dies out in the west ;
Stars are hurled from the sky ;
One light shines on in my breast,—
One hope in my heart burns high.

Steadily burns and bright,
Though other lights flicker and wane ;
A star in the stormy night
Of sorrow, and passion, and pain.

Wild waters around me roll ;
I stand on a troubled shore ;—
I love you with all my soul ;—
O, Sweet, I can do no more !

Through the darkness I send you word ;
From a lonely, desolate land,
Over waters by storm-winds stirred,
A weak bird flies to your hand.

If he reaches you, Love, ere long,
If he come to you out of the gale,
Too weary and sad for song,
Storm-beaten, with wings that fail,—

Although he be no more fair,
Nor his voice any longer sweet,
Stretch hands to succour him there
Before he fall at your feet.

Stretch hands for the sender's sake,—
For his sake who loves you best,—
And so of your tenderness take
The tired bird into your breast.


And he, having reached his goal,
Shall give my message to you,—
I love you with all my soul,—
Ah, Love, it is all I can do !

A THAMES RHYME.

A SUNSET splendour dyes blood-red the river,
And flushes all the fleecy clouds on high.
Before our prow the hissing waters sever,
As up the path of burning light we fly;
A mingling foam-track heaves behind 'neath the calm
eastern sky.

From the red westward, where the day is dying,
Leaps wild and strong the keen fresh evening breeze;
And lips of foam are raised to kiss him flying;—
Kisses he bears, perchance, to far-off seas,
Unknown to man till Nature yields at Doom her
mysteries.

Seas ship ne'er sailed on, plummet never sounded,
Since light broke on them when the world was born,
And the first billow woke from sleep, and bounded,
Mad with its freedom, in that glad first morn;
To laugh at peace for evermore, to turn all rest to
scorn.



This tamèd Titan's heart is full of yearning ;
When to the wind those wild white lips he gave,
Did he not whisper, Lo, my heart is burning
To burst its bonds,—to be no more a slave,—
To cast away the chains and stains man leaves on
every wave?

The sunset light gives place to moonrise glory ;
From the low banks lights star-like flash and gleam ;
The air is full of old romance and story,
And strange sweet songs, whereto the pulsing stream
Beats time with lordly music I hear as in a dream.

Over the prow I lean and gaze before me,
Into the west, where a red light glows still ;
And the sweet spell of dead old times steals o'er me,
And for a space the dream-god works his will,
And the dark Future vanishes with all its shadowy ill.

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But lo, from out the silver-shining water,
The dusky city rises as I gaze.
A murky Venus,—of no god the daughter,—
A Fury glaring through a lurid haze,
That reddens fiercely here and there where the great
highways blaze.

DEAD IN THE COLD.

"Dead in the cold, a song-singing thrush."—C. ROSSETTI.

HERE lies a song-bird killed by the cold;
His glad life over, his singing done;
And the mate he sang to and loved of old
Has left him and fled to a land of sun;
And she has forgotten the days that were,
And found another to sing to her.

A lump of feathers my hand will hold;
And this had music within, and love.
The sad same story! 'Twas thus of old,—
The gods make fun of us there above!—
Man's not too great, nor this bird too small,—
The merry gods make fun of us all.

One thing's immortal, and only one,—
The pain that cankers each wretched life.
Truth turns to falsehood e'er day is done,
And joy to bitterness, peace to strife;
But this upon earth we shall find remain
Unchanged for ever,—immortal Pain!

Between dim rows of ships our way is wended ;
By silent wharf and warehouse dumb we glide ;
The rhyme is rhymed out, and the journey ended ;
For London lamps gleam on the sleepy tide,
And the loud stream of London life roars on the river
side.



A CITY RHYME.

UNDER the lamps the tide flows on
Of faces haggard, and wild, and wan;
Faces weary with toil and care,
Some that are dreaming of days that are gone,
Some that are pallid with pleasures that were;—
How they gleam in the gas-lamps' glare!

A tide of sorrow, and sin, and pain,
Flowing for ever in mist and in rain,
Under the lamps that flicker and flash,
Like thoughts that torture a fevered brain.—
The sky's tears fall with a ceaseless splash;
The wind is howling for prey in vain.—

Rain in the country!—The ground smells sweet,
And a tenderer green is upon the wheat;
But here in the city, when rain falls fast,
Under the lamps, in the crowded street,
The watcher trembles with heart aghast,
As the tide of wretchedness rushes past.

O yearning bosoms, O hearts that fail!
O women with work and with weeping pale!
O men with sullen and downcast eyes!
Who start betimes as the wild wind's wail
Sounds in your ears like an infant's cries,—
Where find ye comfort? Can aught avail?

I see a shadow that followeth
Each one of you, and behold he saith
Low mournful words as he passes by;—
The name of that shadow is mighty Death;—
I am their comforter,—even I,—
Their only comforter 'neath the sky.

To each broken heart, and each toil-worn breast,
I bring sweet slumber, and peace most blest;
I come to each as a welcome friend.
Sleep of all things for the weary is best,
And best of all sleeps the sleep without end,
To these who shall never on earth find rest.

Aye, ye have never that men may see
Friend or deliverer save but he;
Of the sons of men there are none that hear.
Cry to them,—cry that they set you free;—
Cry aloud,—shall they listen? shall they turn ear?
Nay! cease your crying,—it shall not be!

It shall not be, though ye cry for aye !
Do your lives not cry to them, night and day,
Louder than human voice can cry !—
They have not heard,—they have turned away,—
And the shadow saith, as he passes by,
I am their comforter,—even I !

Under the lamps the tide flows on,—
New faces now, and the old are gone,—
But on every face there is pain and care ;
Haggard they are, and wild and wan,
Pallid they gleam in the gas-lamps' glare,
And Death is following always there.



A HYMN OF PRAISE.

O MY Lord Love, who joinest her and me,
I have no other master after thee,
Unto no other god I bend my knee,
Before no other king I bow mine head.
For thou hast given me a royal gift,
Such as to none beside me hath been given;
I dwelt in darkness, thou the clouds didst lift,
And gavest me a star from out thine heaven,
To shine upon me, and to guide my tread.

Bow down, thou saidst, from thy most holy place;
Show him the perfect beauty of thy face;
Light thou around him the black stormy space
Wherein he gropes as one who hath no sight.
And lo, the darkness shrank and fled away,
And the birds sang, and flowers bloomed at my feet;
What could I, Lord, but bow my knees and pray?—
And seeing all my life made glad and sweet,
What could I, dear, but worship thee, the light?

Let the priest praise a god he knows not of;—
Yea, let him lift hands in vain prayer above:—
I, knowing thee that thou wilt hear, O Love,
 Pray to thee only, and praise thee alone.
Silver and gold I have not; but thou art
 No god whose favours can be bought with these.—
I have thy spirit alway in my heart,—
 Unto thee only do I bend my knees,—
 And I am thine, and she is all mine own.

Therefore I am content, and ask no more;
And if I journey unto Death's dim shore,
Or if Life's gathering storms around me roar,
 How should I care who have thy guiding star?
How should I care who have thee for a friend,
 And feel thee near me when all else forsake,
And know that I shall find thee in the end,—
 And when night ended the sweet light shall break,
 Her soul join mine where happy spirits are?

AN UNDERTONE.

THE golden wealth of earth and sky
The poorest share, but yet not I.—
The laughing sunbeams pass me by,—
The flowers are not for me.
On earth below, in heaven on high,
My soul hath nought but thee.

The years are heavy on my head ;
My life is bitter with the dead
Dull dust of pleasures spent and shed
In days no more to be ;—
Yet these were sweet once ;—in their stead,
O Love, have I not thee ?

So, well I know whate'er befall,—
Although my cup be filled with gall,—
Though hope and all things fade and fall
And die away from me,
That having nought, I yet have all,
O Love, whilst I have thee !

Saw the selfish souls they deemed as gods immortal,
Choked and stifled with their avarice,—rich mummies of the dead.

Cursed them, hated, held aloof, heart-sick and lonely;
Pondered to escape them, to once again be free:—
What was gold to one who lived for Love's love only?—
The city, when one woman was all the world to me?—

Can the heart beat music when the heart is chained?
Nay, for the fetters jangle, and all the music dies.
Can the soul that breathes for aye an air guilt-stained
Keep long the purity it gained 'neath clearer skies?

The one—the one is weak,—and mighty is the many;
We must follow—we must follow, if we will or nay;
We demur and shrink, but respite's not for any,
Late or soon the current drifts all the straws away.

I must cast my lot in with my eager fellows;
Does her love not urge me and nerve me for the strife?—
Another straw has drifted,—the rapid booms and bellows;
How it tosses,—plunges,—struggles,—this foaming stream of life.

And the years pass quickly in toil and joy and sorrow;
In struggle and hard fighting 'mid the fighting crowd;
One day wounded, bleeding,—triumphant on the morrow;
And one day near the purple, and next day near a
shroud.

This is life worth living;—grappling thus for glory.
How the wingèd days fly that lag in dull repose!—
The Past recedes,—recedes,—Was it but a story
That I read in childhood, that love of mine,—who
knows?

Indistinct it grows,—yet sometimes I remember
Something that was sweet,—a look,—a word,—a kiss;
At the breath the flames leap round the dying ember,
Warming for one moment the heart wherein it is.

For one moment only, and,—that moment over,—
Die, and leave the ember dead and black and cold:—
Ere they die I see her as she was,—my lover
Of the mad and merry laughing days of old.

Sometimes in the midnight wakening I wonder
How my life would look, dare I spread out its
scroll?—
What my soul would say had I the time to ponder?—
And what I could answer to an accusing soul?

Yet no man lives who never, gazing backward, sickens
At the piteous patchwork all his life will seem,
When some wind of memory in his bosom quickens
The ashes of ambition,—the dust of some dead dream.

For the gods gave labour, and failure for its payment ;
And the best work in the end is marred and
incomplete ;
Life is a thing of patches,—and like to ragged raiment,—
Who shall renew the garment, or make the rents to
meet ?



ON THE PIER.

A CRASH of music, a blaze of light,
Where the dancers whirl in glee ;—
And out beyond the silent night,
Over the sighing sea,
Whose waves sigh on—sigh on—sigh on—
Whose waves sigh on for ever.

So with its music and mirth and song,
Its glory of laughter and love,
To a maddening measure Life whirls along,
But Death is around and above ;
And still thro' the music we hear the rhyme,
The sorrowful song of the tide of Time,
Whose waves sigh on—sigh on—sigh on—
Whose waves sigh on for ever.

A FAREWELL.

I THOUGHT I should love you for ever ;
I loved you a week and no more,
And now I can smile as we part.
To me through all time you will never
Be that which you were once before,—
The sun, the delight of my heart.

The star that came after outshone you ;
I flew to the brightest and best,
As a butterfly flies to a flower ;
The heart that once doted upon you
Is out of your toils and at rest,—
Your captive is freed from your power.

Farewell and good-bye!—and good-morrow
To the love that is dawning afar,
And gilding hot Passion's black night!
For joyfulness comes after sorrow,
And after the tempest the star,
And after the darkness the light.

TWO PICTURES.

THE murky evening closes fast o'er every busy street ;
The wintry eastern blast is barbed with piercing
points of sleet ;
The human tide sets homeward through all its myriad
ways,
And the roaring of the city will be silent in a space.
Wild fire of stormy sunset flames in the windy sky,
And city smoke and whirling fog are struggling upon
high,
And cold and dark and silent between its blackened
walls,
Like a huge slothful serpent the grimy water crawls.
A gloomy and unfitting frame to hold a picture fair ;—
Above, the murky evening sky, and the ruddy smoke-
blurred glare,
And a string of barges gliding from the bridge's shade
below,
A funeral procession, dreary and black and slow ;
And gloom upon the city, and gloom upon the stream,
And red lights flashing through the fog with fierce and
frightened gleam ;

Far off a gong is booming,—a railway whistle peals,—
There's a ceaseless harness-jingle, an endless roar of
wheels,—

And in the very midst of all this uproar loud,
Half-leaning o'er the bridge's side, and parted from the
crowd, [stand

A bright-eyed, dainty damsel with golden hair doth
By her stalwart handsome lover who fondles one white
hand.

As at magician's bidding, the roaring street to me
Seems to grow still, and nought of all the sights around
I see :—

Black barges, walls, and water, vanish, and only there
I see young lovers, only hear old love-songs in the air;
And fraught with ancient tenderness that dreamy
music comes,

Like a shepherd's piping heard across the roll of battle-
drums.

I cannot choose but watch them, and stay my pas-
sing feet, [sweet.

He is so tall and handsome, and she so slight and
And to mine eyes it seemeth, around them and above,
There glows a golden halo, a sacred light of love.

Her sweet face is upturned to his, and on it falls the
light

Of a wind-tormented gas-lamp that makes it wan and
white ;

Into her eyes he gazes, each draws to each more nigh,
And the locked hands tighten,—tremble,—and the lips
move longingly ;

But if they meet and mingle, I can nor guess nor tell,
For scattered is the picture and broken is the spell,
E'en at the crowning moment, as in those visions bright,
That ever vanish from us at the instant of delight.

One moment shown so clearly, as though to me alone,
Then lost amid the crowd of the unnoticed and
unknown. [I see

Though lost, its memory haunts me, and many times
Again that night the picture that was shown to none
but me. [and care

Days make it dim and dimmer, and weeks of work
Erase it even as they erase full many pictures fair ;
And weeks have grown to months, and the memory
is gone,

And the mill-horse round is trodden, and the mill goes
grinding on.

The Winter yields to Spring-time, Spring in her turn
doth wane,

And Summer heat broods over street and park and
square and lane ;

The city swoons and swelters beneath the fiery sun,
And the workers' heads are heavy before the day is
done.

The mists rise from the river this sultry summer night,
And "Twelve" is booming solemnly across the waters
white.

From Westminster's tall tower that flashes from afar,
As though 'twould have us fancy 'tis the nation's
polar star.

The resting river murmurs low a hushed and drowsy
tune,

As one who half-asleep herself to a half-waked child
doth croon,

And the song is soft and soothing, and I stay awhile
to list

To the river gliding by me beneath the clinging mist.
O gliding, gliding river, with your musical low song,—
No discord in your voice to-night that speaks of pain
or wrong,—

No cry of fear or anger, no broken-hearted moan,—
You have made my wild blood tranquil with your
peaceful monotone.

I sing you song for song,—I give you praises due,—
Not even Father Tiber had e'er such fame as you,
O Father Thames,—and so my song unfinished dies
away:—

[ray?

What cometh golden-gleaming beneath that pale moon—
The white mist parts a little, and hark, a rippling sound
Of waves that laugh together over something they have
found,—

Until they roll before me, with many a toss and turn,
A huddled heap of drowned limbs,—a Face with eyes
that burn!—

O now, you mocking river, your laugh's the laugh of
Hell,
And all your tranquil music has become a dismal knell.

Cry out, O murderous river, even as I now cry,—
Until our mingled voices pierce the unheeding sky,
And waken Truth and Mercy,—Nay, still the drowsy
song,

And the low and rippling laughter at wretchedness and
wrong;

And still around their burden the wavelets leap and
play,—

But help is near, O river, to rob you of your prey.—

Wring out the matted tresses, wipe the disfigured face,
Lay straight the broken limbs, and so fall back a space;
Let the light shine upon her:—does any know the
dead?—

Then flashed once more upon me a stormy sunset red,
And the picture shown so clearly to me one winter's
night.

O stalwart handsome lover, I would you saw this sight:—
That your lids might never close but this ghastly face
shone through!

This is your doing, lover,—may God requite it you!—

Belike you tired of kisses, and of loving looks and sighs,
And of tremulous twined fingers, and deep imploring
eyes ;—

And you have had the pleasure, and she has borne the
pain :—

This night ends all her loving. You can begin again,—
Marry,—grow fat and wealthy,—praise God for all His
grace ;—

May Death, when he doth seek you, look on you with
this face !—

But you, poor drownèd sister, even in death so fair,
Rest sweetly, freed for ever from passion and despair.
Let others read life's riddle, I have nor heart nor skill ;
I look into your awful eyes, and tremble and am still.
Let the parson take your story to adorn his Sunday
theme,

When the organ thunder rises and the painted windows
gleam,

And the well-dressed crowd are gathered of the modern
Pharisees,

To display their costly garments, and to posture on
their knees.

Not with their calm complacence I kneel beside you now,
Not with their lofty pity do I kiss your battered brow.

Who am I to judge another, to pardon or condemn ?
Have I not my brethren's weakness, and passions like
to them !

You have gone through the darkness, and the mystery
is plain,—

Or else you sleep the dreamless sleep, safe from both
thought and pain ;

But e'en as one bewildered 'twixt Heaven and earth I
stand,

Like Ishmaël, my hand 'gainst all, and 'gainst me
every hand :—

And they cry, *Peace, Peace*, and spare not,—while
there is no peace, I say ;—

*Room for the stretcher there,—let them carry the corpse
away.*

No peace ?—no truth ?—no justice ?—only to stand and
wait,

As the iron years press onward to the iron wall of Fate ?
To be crushed at last and done with ?—Is it this I
am meant to see ?

This the lesson to learn from the pictures shown to me ?
A little life and an evil, ended by night, our lot ?

A yearning unfulfilled, a wrong that is righted not ?
*Not so ;—lo, this is the lesson ;—temperance,—self-
control ;—*

*Keep thy body in subjection, care only for thy soul ;—
Curb passion with prayer and fasting,—One half of
me then must go ?—*

Life is maimed enough already : I toss you back *Not so.*—

You would make fair earth a prison,—chain man where
Fate forbore,
And women should leave off kissing, and wine should
foam no more.

Settle I pray with nature, and I may follow you then,—
Meantime, I am but a man, working and living 'mongst
men, [yet—
And the secret is still unsolvèd, and the riddle baffles
Live thy life and be merry, eat, and drink, and forget!
Think not, but be blithe and busy, and live for laughter
and love:—

Sufficient unto the coming Night is the evil or good
thereof.

O friends, I must cry you mercy! *Not so*,—I answer
you too; [with you.

I cannot weep with the others, and I cannot laugh
And the world's strong sons pass laughing, and the
world's fair daughters glance

With a mocking pity on me as they whirl in Life's
gay dance:—

Godlike in strength and beauty, if Life could last, they
seem;

Now, in some sickly slumber they are shadows of a
dream;

And I gaze past them ever, and hopelessly I long
For the day that cometh never, and the righting of
the wrong.

A YEAR OF LOVE.

I N the pleasant meadow lands,
Glad and green with coming spring,
My Love and I joined hearts and hands
When the birds began to sing.

Where the woodland ways were dim
With sweet Summer's garlanding,
My Love and I joined lip and limb
While the birds did build and sing.

Where the autumn orchard drips
Comes no sound of song or wing;
Pale our cheeks and cold our lips,
And the birds forget to sing.

In the rainy winter days
Misty meads and woods are wan;
My Love and I go different ways,
And the birds are gone.

A J U N E S O N G.

DOWN deep in the clover and midst the tall grasses
The mowers are mowing this midsummer morn,
And the blackbird is listening perched on a thorn,
To the ring of the scythe-blades that sounds like
a tune ;

And the sigh of the soft summer wind as it passes
Is sweet with the breath of wild roses of June.

Lo under our feet the green harvest is trodden ;—
The harvest we reap is a harvest of Death ;—
There's a taint of fresh blood in the summer-wind's
breath,
And the sword-blades ring fiercely, a terrible tune ;
With the blood of our brothers the red field is sodden ;—
Death reaps a fat harvest this morning in June.

Around in the sunlight the great sea laughs madly,
Before us the cloven foam flashes like fire ;
So full of glad life is the air we inspire,
Our blood seems to dance to the sea's laughing
tune ;

And the eager ship battles the billows as gladly
As she too felt in her the wild joy of June.

Hot and smoky as Hell is the horrible city,
Where the usurers gather gold harvest of gain,
And the widows and orphans curse God in their pain ;
Where the guineas ring ceaselessly Mammon's harsh
tune,
And life is a strife to the knife without pity,
And money buys song-birds and roses of June.

Soft, soft are the mosses, the young grass is tender,
The dim air is full of the coo of the dove ;
And we lie lip to lip where the leaves lisp of love,
And the wood is so quiet the wind seems to swoon ;
And as in some temple a cool softened splendour
Is shed over all things this morning in June.

Oh, tall grow the weeds here, and rank the grave grass is,
And chill is the shadow, and soft the damp sod ;—
And the worms,—it is strange how they crawl from
each clod ;—

While the robin sits eyeing them, piping no tune ;—
The morning breeze sickeneth here as it passes :—
Death—Death is lord over thee, sweet month of
June.

A V I G I L.

I SAW the lightning, steely blue,
Leap from the midnight sky;
I heard the sea's roar all night through,
And the wind's cry,
And the spouting rain
On the window-pane,
And the thunder's voice on high.

Between the rifted clouds the red
Moon flamed, and seemed to flee,
Plunged thro' the inky sky in dread;—
And the white sea
To its mad queen cried,
And the storm replied
With a shout of maniac glee.

The fierce wind wrestled with the trees,
The leaves flew past my place
Mixed with white foam-flakes;—skies and seas
Mingled in space;
Now and again
In the window-pane
I saw a dim white face;—

Like mine own ghost, at gaze on me
With intense shadowy eyes,
Turned from the passion-pallid sea,
The lurid skies,—
From the rage and rout
Of the storm without,
In dim and sad surprise,

To the storm and passion in my soul,
Where were lost hopes and fears,
That flew like leaves, nor found a goal ;
Lost youth,—lost years,—
The voice of the past
Like a thunder-blast,
And a bitter rain of tears ;

And blackest darkness,—aye, Hell's night,
That brooded over all ;
For in the storm Hope's faint frail light
Did fade and fall,
While madly above
Drove the moon of Love,
Blood-red in a cloudy pall.

Lost—lost—the mad storm howled the word,
And from the booming shore,
Above the tempest's voice, I heard
The sea's hoarse roar,

And it woke the Dead
With the word it said,—
And the word was—Nevermore.

They clustered round me,—each well-known,
Dead, sightless, grave-worn face
Turned upon mine;—the thunder's moan
Grew low a space;
And a slow sad song
From the shadowy throng,
Arose in that lonely place.

One word sung sadly o'er and o'er,
Till my brain throbb'd and rung
To hear no sound but "Nevermore"
From each dry tongue,—
Tho' some upon earth
Wagged well in mirth,
And half the singers were young.

"Have ye no word of Hope to speak?
Say, shall the grave uncloze?"
Then from the throng a hideous shriek
Of laughter rose:—
Have we hope to give?—
Thou shalt die, not live,—
But at last thou shalt find repose.

Mourning and mirth alike shall cease,
Sorrow and joy shall die,
And pain and pleasure end in peace,
And storms go by :—
At last thou shalt rest
On thy mother's breast,
As a weary child doth lie :—

Lost, maybe, for a few brief days,
In some wood dim and wide,
He hath wandered thro' thorny ways,
With none to guide ;—
By his aimless quest
He hath gained this rest,—
Doth he ask for aught beside ?—

Lo the blue lightning leaping free
From out the sundered sky,
The hoarse roar of the raging sea,
And the wind's cry ;
And the ceaseless rain
On the window-pane,
And the thunder's voice on high,—

And darkness,—and a pallid face
That scarce seemed like mine own,

In the storm-beaten window's space,
And I alone ;—
And the mad moon there
In the stormy air,
With the leaves and the foam-flakes blown.



A SYMPHONY IN GRAY.

GRAY sea-mist gathers this winter day
O'er the foamless waste of a gray-green sea,
'Neath the sombre roof of a sky grown gray
With the rest of the world, and my love and me.
And of all gray things 'neath the gray sad sky,
We are saddest and grayest, my love and I.

I scarce can tell 'tis the sea doth move
'Neath the wavering lines of the gray sea-mist :—
So shrouded, hidden, doth lie my love,
There are none to look on it now, nor list
If it move at all, if it live or die,—
Out of sight, forgotten, my love and I.

A note of blue in the sky o'erhead ;—
An answer of green in the sea below,—
On the down's bare bushes a shimmer of red,—
But for me no colour, nor gleam nor glow,
Of all gray things 'neath the gray, gray sky,
We only change not, my love and I.

A SOLDIER'S GRAVE.

AH, stay one moment, only one,
Beside this mound of clay,
Whereon the slowly setting sun
Lets flicker his last ray.
One moment stay.

A year ago a youth went forth
From home and faces bright ;
The kings had stirred up war on earth,
And by their heavenly right
Forced him to fight.

He lies beneath this grassy sod ;
For here, not long ago,
A victory,—“by the grace of God,”—
Was gainèd o'er the foe,
And he laid low.

Yea, he upon whose early years
Such tender hopes did rest,—
Alloyed by even tenderer fears,—
A bullet through his breast,—
Died here unblest.

No mother raised his dying head,
His lips no sister kissed ;
But o'er him foaming chargers sped,
And in the sulphur mist
The bullet hissed.

The air was full of shouts and cries,
The cannon roared around ;
The flame of blood was in his eyes,
And like a dying hound,
He bit the ground.

A year ago he dreamed of fame,
Who lies so dreamless here.
He coveted the poet's name,—
And fame to him seemed near
This time last year.

A year ago he loved a maid
(Even love to kings must bow),
Now in the dust his head is laid,
And where she kissed his brow
The worms feed now.

O maiden in that far-off home,
Who sittest waiting there !

Behold, thy lover does not come,
And though thou art so fair
He does not care.

In thy soft heart is there no thought
Of cruel murderous wrong?
Think'st thou the king for whom he fought
Will join with him ere long
In heaven's song?

O parents walking life's rough path
With broken hearts this day!
Wakes in your souls no holy wrath
At him who took away
Your son to slay?

But he!—The music round him swims,
Sweet odours haunt the air;
His courtiers, in sounding hymns,
His mighty deeds declare;—
He listens there.

The crown,—the crown is on his head!
The sceptre in his hand!
The Soldier King, in robes of red,
The Saviour of his land,—
Proud doth he stand.

Doth he think now of this dead clay,
The victim of his lust
For Empire? Lo, I tell you—nay!
But kings are only dust,
And God is just.

Let us depart and leave this grave
To darkness and to night;
Around it let the wild winds rave
Until the morning light
Shines pure and bright.

Then, when the strife of kings has ceased,
And when all men are free,
While through the blushes of the East
With shouts and jubilee
Her face we see,—

Republic! born of heaven and crown'd,
And fledged with angel-wings,—
Let us return to this low mound;
For here the night-wind sings
The doom of kings.


A U T U M N S O N G .

SING low and sing sadly, sweet summer is dead,
And the leaves that once crowned her, her blood
hath dyed red,

For flower-time is over, and autumn is here.
Flutter the leaves to the ground and lie ;
The flowers turn pallid, and droop and die ;
And the cold grey clouds in the sullen sky,
Gather to weep for the dying year.

Past is the summer, and all things sweet
With summer are past upon flying feet ;
And we stand in the autumn days.
And the mists arise, and the wet winds wail,
And the world in her autumn of age grows pale
With fruits that wither and flowers that fail
In barren and leafless ways.

Sing no glad song by the year's death-bed,
But twine sad cypress about the head,
And sing ye sadly, and mourn and weep ;



All glad things die as the summer dies,
All laughter endeth at last in sighs,
All fair things fall as the flowers, all eyes
That joyed in beauty are closed in sleep.

Yet if some flower of old time remain,—
Some bud of pleasure on thorns of pain,—
If one waif snatched from the wreck we keep,—
Perchance when softly from summer skies
Morn's hand is laid on the darkened eyes,
And the sleeper is bidden Awake—Arise,—
That flower shall waken with him from sleep.



T H E E N D .

FOR all youth's spring-time bright and brief,
For all its summer fire,
Lo, sad autumn strips the leaf
From the flower Desire ;
Lo, stern winter slays the bud,—
Proves the spring's work vain,—
Chills the summer warmth of blood
With frost of age and pain.
For thee no more the spring-time is,
Nor summer flowers and fire ;
But palsied lips, too cold to kiss,
And dust of dead Desire ;
And darkness gathering o'er thy way,
And cypresses that wave,
In the last breath of dying day,
Over an open grave.

SONNETS

1

A C H O R D.

LAST night I chanced upon a nursery rhyme,
An ancient jingle, out of fashion long,
A poor patched verse, a sorry little song,
That stirred my spirit like a fairy chime,
With dreams and memories of olden time,
And voices sweet of many a tuneful tongue
That soothed my childhood,—silent now among
The silent shadows of that sunless clime

Where all sleep well unsung to. Once again
I heard the voices I shall hear no more,
And saw the kindly faces that are gone
Forever now out of the whole world's ken:—
One tiny waif cast up on Memory's shore;—
This shrine of sand I raise, and so fare on.

A T A G R A V E.

THE mournful mists arise on every hand
From the flat fields, bare now, and chill, and gray;
At the sad ending of the winter day,
Beside a new-made grave awhile we stand;
One hath gone from us to the Unknown Land;
One whom we loved hath trod Death's lonely way,
No mortal love for guide, nor arm for stay,—
None to give welcome to that starless strand.

Could we have helped her, gladly had we gone.
She taught our lips to speak, our feet to tread;
But from our midst her soul hath pass'd alone;
Ours now no longer,—O, in thy low bed,
At peace from pain for evermore, sleep on;
God guard thy slumber, happy, holy Dead.

TO ———.

I.

I CANNOT sing to thee as I would sing,
For I stand speechless at thy beauty's bloom,
As one who in thick mist and sombre gloom
Beholds a sudden light anear him spring,
And stands amazed, dumbly wondering ;—
And knows not where 'twill lead—to rest or doom—
To his far home or to some lonely tomb,—
Yet cannot stay his feet from following.

Aye, lead!—I follow whither thou wilt go ;
Give me thine hand,—yea, be thou one with me !
To life or death, to joy or tears and woe,
My love, whate'er may chance I follow thee.
Thou art the Light,—I follow blindly so,—
Yet not all blindly, sweetest ; *Thee* I see !

II.

I cannot sing to thee as I would sing ;—
The words are weak, and are not said aright ;
And tuneless is the lyre whose strings I smite
Uncertainly with fingers faltering,

And my voice harsh ;—yet, sweet one, did it ring
With all the melody of music's might,—
If my song thrilled the soul with such delight
That men and angels listened wondering,—
I think that you would love no whit the more ;
Your heart would not be truer than it is ;
The skill might please you, but that pleasure o'er,
More love were not in that song than in this.
And love is best, the poets sang of yore,
And more than all men's praise one woman's kiss.



LOVE AND FATE.

THERE spake a voice ;—Behold, your ways diverge ;
Your paths lie separate and wide apart ;
The bonds must break that bind you heart to heart.
Nay,—cease to cling on this wise,—cease to urge ;—
That last kiss is the last, your dead love's dirge,—
For ere your lips have ceased to burn and smart
With the sweet fever and dividing start,
In separate channels all your lives will merge.

And we looked each on each ; and once again
The keen swift lips their sweet desire did sate ;
And our tears, intermingled, fell like rain
At those two words, Apart and Separate :—
When rose a voice that thrilled each languid vein,—
Here is true Love,—and Love can conquer Fate.

NEW YEAR SONNETS.

I

O'ER midnight fields the silver moon doth dream,
Her face as calm and placid as of yore ;
The Old Year standeth on the Night's dark shore,
And gazes silent at the deep wild stream
That rolls before him :—rapids glance and gleam.
Wave answers wave with ceaseless deafening roar ;
The darkness gathers round him more and more ;
But on the world of man the moon doth beam
With peaceful smile. Upon the still midnight
A muffled sound is borne ;—O bow thine head !
The year's knell rings from the dim steeple's height,—
With all his stains on Time's flood floats he dead.—
Then look thou up. The moon shines calm and bright
Here is a stainless maiden in his stead.

II

Look that thou touch her not with unclean hands ;—
See that thou stain her not with guilt or blood.
That sin-stained corpse borne seaward on the flood
Was once as pure as she,—the maid who stands
Now smiling sweetly o'er the sleeping lands

A hopeful promise.—Shall she make it good?
Shall she pass on in splendid maidenhood,
Or black with guilt and scarred by battle-brands
As he whose knell the mournful bells have tolled?—
Say thou,—for as thou sayest it shall be
Either for good or ill;—thyself dost hold
In thine own hand the fate of her and thee.
Look not to others! Be thou brave and bold,—
Let the world go, but make thine own soul free!—



A BIRTHDAY SONNET.

FOR me, dear Love, the years seem all too strong ;
Too fierce, too busy, and too full of noise ;
They break my hopes as children's idle toys,
They mock at me, and turn the right to wrong :
Now they have left me scarce a single song ;
And, after silence, tuneless is the voice
Wherewith I cry to-day, *O heart, rejoice,*
And find this day at least not sad nor long.

Tuneless and harsh, yet my heart leaps to hear,
And greet this day whereon my Lady came
From the pure Morning Lands so broad and clear,
A goddess clothed and crowned with Love's fair flame.
The generous years have given thee, my Dear,—
Let them take all beside, I will not blame.

A LONELY EVENING.

I HAVE not spoken the long evening through ;
I have sat silent by a dying fire,
Alone ; have watch'd the last dim spark expire,
Have seen the lamp's flame burn to ghostly blue ;
And like child's hands my thoughts went out to you
In my soul's darkness with a keen desire ;
Now in the fruitless quest they droop and tire,
Finding no comfort they can cling unto.

The cold wind howls outside adown the night ;
Heavy the snow-clouds hang in heaven above ;
No stars at all,—no moon, nor any light,—
No word to tell how goes it with my love :—
The hours clash iron wings in their slow flight,
Else could I not believe dull Time to move.

L O N E L I N E S S .

I.

LOW burns the lamp within the lonely room ;
The dreary evening endeth in black night ;—
Sitting alone there rise before my sight
Strange hell-born phantoms from the gathering gloom :
Sins that were dead methought, and in their tomb ;
Foul fiends that gibber in the dying light,
And whisper wickedness,—and hands that write
Upon the blank wall prophecies of doom ;
And corpse-pale faces floating in the air,
With lips whose burning kisses bring swift death.—
I feel the maddening touch of cool soft hair ;
They tempt my parched mouth with delicious breath
That turns to murmured laughter my poor prayer :—
Me heaven forsakes and hell encompasseth.

II.

Yet e'er my fainting soul is wholly bound,
I, erst forsaken, find one standing nigh,—
The type to me of stainless purity,—
Whose peaceful brow, with Love's bright halo crowned,

Sheds light upon the hell-storm whirling round
My tortured soul,—and from the depths I cry,
“Image of all the good that I have found
On earth, give succour now before I die!”

And at that light the phantoms fade and flee,
Leaving me dreaming in the peace thereof;
And she hath words of cheer to speak to me,
To my parched soul like soft dew from above,
O heaven forsakes me not, whate’er may be,
While I keep this one glorious gift of Love.



A U T U M N.

THERE is a mournful sound of moaning seas ;
The dull sky weeps, the low winds moan and sigh ;
The last leaves flutter from the autumn trees,
The last hopes fall from my sad soul and die.
Song-birds are fled now ; winter draweth nigh
With gray cold face whereon the tear-drops freeze ;
And blank and void of colour is the sky,
And my heart void of comfort and of peace.

'Tis not the pain that I myself must bear ;
Each hath his sorrow,—must accept his fate :—
I would not beat against the iron gate,
Nor bribe the gods with piteous praise and prayer
For mine own self :—ah, the dull day's despair
Presses on all I love with wintry weight !

D E A T H.

SLEEP without dreams whereon no morn shall shed
Fierce fire to melt the silvern chains of rest :—
No sleepless care upon the weary breast,
No burning trouble in the low-laid head ;
No unfulfilled desire, nor any dread
Of evil yet to come ; nor hopes molest,
Nor fears disturb that slumbering most blest.
They sleep in peace the whole world's dreamless dead.

Sad wakenings they knew in days of old,
These who shall waken unto joy or grief
No more forever. As a tale is told,
As the grass withereth, as falls a leaf,—
So man's life endeth ; and from pain set free
His soul finds slumber with Persephone.

A DEAD POET.

WHITE songless lips, a tuneless, broken lyre,
A heart that will not ache or beat again ;
Eyes that are darkened now of all life's fire,
Breast that is free for aye from all life's pain :
He sang for pleasure first, and then for hire,
Till the tense lute-string snapped beneath the strain ;
Last—rest, sweet rest alone was his desire,
And he rests sweetly now where he is lain.

Poor singer, unto whom the world was rough,
And heaven but cold, and life a fight for bread,
Rest on!—the world they say hath songs enough ;
Rest thou among the unscornful songless dead,
To waken safe at last from man's rebuff,
And rise with deathless laurel round thy head.

A R E V E L.

NOW the mad rhymes run riot in my brain,
Like drunken Mænads dancing to no tune;
Half-seen through tremulous leaves of merry June,
In some old woodland, ne'er to grow again
Save in a poet's verse ;—a wanton train,
Tossing the flowers wherewith the ways are strewn,
Making wild revel till my senses swoon,
And my soul sickens with a giddy pain.

Snatches of song in laughter lost and drowned ;
Laughter shot through with kisses and sweet cries ;—
White glancing limbs and brows with vine-wreaths
crowned ;—
Flushed cheeks and wine-stained lips and heated eyes ;
So runneth all the riotous revel round,
And dizzy with the sight the watcher lies.

A LAST SONNET.

THE weary night draws on with winds that wail,
And flying clouds and sudden storms of rain ;
The sickly moon is far upon the wane ;
Over their eyes the stars have drawn a veil ;
And all the windy sky is sad and pale,
As though it sorrowed for the whole world's pain ;
And glad songs melt into a funeral strain
O'er lives that wither, and o'er hopes that fail.

Men sleep around us ;—let us too court sleep.
The time is past for singing ;—even so.—
Bow down a space, wring ye your hands and weep
For heaven so helpless,—earth so full of woe ;
But sing no more.—The darkness grows more deep,
And the clouds thicken ;—rise, and let us go !

S U N R I S E.

FIRE of glad sunrise on the hill's far height,
And in the eastern heavens ;—but I go
Through wild wood ways deep down the dale below,
Wrapped in funereal garments of the night ;
Where the bat circles in his aimless flight,
And ghost-like owls flit heavily and slow,
And stagnant pools with pale corruption's glow
Mock the faint flickering of dawn's healthful light.

Forward from this foul place,—and forward still !—
Though narrow is the path and dark the way ;
Onward and upward to the sunlit hill
Though all the fiends are loud for thee to stay !
There, led by the indomitable Will,
Thy soul shall drink the splendour of God's day.

ABOVE HOPE

PICK ye whatsoever flower if Hope ye may :
 For flowers are few within this barren land,
 Where dust men's bones and heaps of golden sand
 Lie in a wilderness track the weary way
 Their feet have trod many a thousand day
 Or ever at the journey's end they stand
 See that the flower be not within thy hand :—
 What hast thou left at that of this decay !

Stay not at pick :—Such flowers are not for thee ;
 Thou hast thy journey's end almost in view.
 The sun the weak need Hope. Thine eyes pierce
 through
 All clouds :—thou fear'st not whatsoever shall be ;—
 Thou know'st enough, knowing thy soul is true,—
 So trust on for ever steadily.

N I G H T.

I STAND as one who on a mountain stands,
Straining his eyes to catch the dawn's first light;
Weary of wandering through the stormy night,
And stretching eastward claspèd praying hands;
While underneath the loud sea on the sands
Roars and is troubled, and in great affright,
He hears the elements in clanging fight,
And from afar dim groans of ruined lands.

He thinks of Love, and lo, it seemeth vain;
Of Life, and 'tis a waste of pain and wrong;
The sun,—the sun will never rise again,
Nor glad birds sing their joyous morning song.—
So stand I waiting, so mine eyes I strain,
Praying the dawn may come to me ere long.

D R E A M E R S.

A DREAMER!—Yea, a dreamer :—we despise
These fledgless nestlings of youth's fevered thought ;
With rhymes bedecked, of dreams and visions wrought,
And filled with fancies and with fantasies.
Shake off thy drowsy stupor and arise.
Get gold and silver,—for all else is nought ;—
No time is here for dreaming ;—life is short,
And is not meant for slumber.—*We are wise.*

Ye wise ones, know ye any what are dreams ?—
Can one be certain if he wake or sleep ?—
Do ye know truth from falsehood, all ye wise ?
Nay, no man knows ;—but only thus it seems,
We laugh a little, most of all we weep,—
And each one dreams vain dreams until he dies.

A POET'S REWARD.

HE sows delight, he reapeth heaviness :
Pain maketh music on his heart's strained strings ;
His doom,—he may not live unless he sings,
And, singing, he shall taste its weariness.—
The tender cords that ache with the fierce stress,—
The throbbing brain that night-long reels and rings
With thoughts that in the dark beat aimless wings,
And ghost-like rhymes that wander music-less ;—
And dreams of pleasures that his life hath missed,
And an insatiable desire ;—all these are his ;—
Singing the dear delight of Love's long kiss,
He dreameth but of lips he never kissed ;—
He knows the weary nothingness of things ;—
This is his curse and his reward,—he sings.

A BAY-WREATH.

AYE, for a jest she wove a wreath of bays,
And crowned me with it, laughing low to see;
And O, that leafy wreath was more to me,
Far more than all earth's gifts, than all men's praise.
If fame await me in the future days,—
If failure stands where I hoped fame would be,—
How should I care, rewarded royally
By her who is the mistress of my lays?

For with that wreath she gave me a sweet thing,—
More than the world's smiles to me or its gold:—
She, my soul's mistress, gave to me her love;—
Wherefore unto her praise I alway sing,
And if the world smiles on me or looks cold,
So she is mine, I do not reck thereof.

A D E D I C A T I O N .

TO ———.

LET them lie here, my verses, at your feet ;
All that I have to give you ;—let them lie.

Too weak and frail to bear a wintry sky,
Or to live through the sultry summer heat.
Poor scattered blossoms that the winds will beat
To nothing, save you give them ere they die,
For Love's sake, O my Love, a smile, a sigh,
To make the drooping strong, the scentless sweet.

Yet if thou findest one among them fair ;—

In one some shape and colour of a flower ;—

Though marred and dull, one fairer than the rest ;

Take thou the blossom to thy bosom where

Roses of Love and lordly lilies tower ;—

To grow, a perfect flower, upon thy flower-like
breast.

—————

SUNSET LIGHT.

I DREAMED we floated on a quiet sea,
Westward and westward to the setting sun ;
I thought the toil of earthly life was done,
And we should rest together, I and she,
In some far land where Love was Lord, and free,—
Not earth's sad slave, the chained and downcast one :
A sunset land where strifes and storms were none,
And Time dethroned danced to a melody.

I thought on all the weariness gone by ;
The night's vague trouble and the day's dull care ;
The yearning for pure life and clearer air,
And the repose of the serene sweet sky ;
And our lips met, and lo it seemed that I
Knew in that moment why past troubles were.

WITH VERSES.

YOU'LL read these verses when alone you sit,
In the long winter evenings dark and chill;
When all except the storm is very still,
And dusky shadows round about you flit
On wall and ceiling;—and when he who writ
The rhymes is far away;—while loud and shrill
Outside the wild wind raves and roars until
Your heart sinks sadly as you list to it.

And you will wonder what I'm doing then,
And think of me with mingled hope and fear;—
Whilst I, amid the rush and hum of men,
Shall dream of your sweet face to me so dear;
And as you turn unto the page again,
You'll know my soul to your soul has been near.

IN THE GARDENS.

A VISION of wild faces in the night;
Such faces as are never seen by day;
The sound of wicked whispers blown astray;
Black seas of darkness;—glaring isles of light;
And by the stately statue's stainless white
Flushed Mænads dance in drunken disarray,
To strains that shake the heart of maiden May,
Crouched 'mid her tender foliage, with affright.

In the wild whirl there is some breathing space,
And as the calm moon o'er a stormy sea
Rises in clear mid heaven imperially,
Slowly in my soul's sky flowers forth Her face,
Foretelling peace and quietude to be:—
O Moon, know'st thou one weary wave finds hope
in thee?

TO _____.

MY light has been obscured so long,—so long,—
I cannot tell if it will shine again;—

O Queen,—my light,—rise up once more and reign!
Scatter the mists of envy and of wrong
That cloud thy face,—rise,—beautiful and strong
As Heaven's sun, and pure of spot or stain,
At the meridian of thine Art's domain,
Rule thou once more, and once more take my song.

Yea, as the sun takes the lark's song at morn,
As the moon takes at eve the thrush's note,—
Even as thy right who bade the song outpour:—
O sun, behold thou leav'st thy lark forlorn,
O moon, in vain is stretched the thrush's throat,
Until thou fill'st his heaven with light once more.

A REMINISCENCE OF COROT.

ABOVE, the tender leaves, grown wan and gray,
Half mingle with the quiet gray-grown sky ;
Below, the wondrous misty moonbeams lie,—
Dim shafts of light across the flower-strewn way,—
And 'twixt the solemn stems two lovers stray,
'Neath the great arch of boughs that meet on high ;
While over all sweet Evening, lovingly,
Like Salmacis melts in sweet Night away.

The spell of it grows on us as we stand,
The stillness, the deep calm and the repose,—
The sadness making all more sweet,—and we
Down the dim avenue go hand in hand,
Watch the mists gather and the evening close,
And speak no word for very ecstasy.

AT THE WALKER EXHIBITION.

O DEATH, art thou not satiate and full fed?
Shalt thou have greater triumphs than this one?
Hopes higher dashed, a brighter life undone,
The laurels blasted on a worthier head?
Or bitterer tears than these that now are shed
Above his grave whose life was but begun,
When from the lovely world of flowers and sun,
He passed to thy dark kingdom of the Dead?

Thou art our lord, the strongest is thy slave,
Thou turn'st the tenderest hopes to scorn and woe,
And as the grass we wither at thy breath;—
But him thou canst not prison in the grave,—
Nay, gazing here on his life's work, we know
That he, the Dead, hath vanquished thee, O Death.

A M E M O R Y.

I HEARD the midnight pass with heavy feet,
And the morn come with dubious step and slow ;
I heard the dog howl and the night-wind blow
All night outside adown the empty street ;
While, like a timid bird, poor Sleep did beat
Her wings within me, slaying herself so,
And ghosts of happy hours of long ago
Mocked me with faces fair and voices sweet.

In sunlit avenues by Cam I strolled,
Saw the trim lawns slope downward to the stream,
Saw the broad Fen-land with its harvest gold
Like a great shield flash back the sunlight's gleam ;
Till in the quiet of those days of old
At last tired Memory melted to a dream.

TO ———.

(With a Copy of "In Memoriam.")

I SEND you greeting now from oversea,
From noisy London to your quiet home,
Where the great city's din can never come,
But where o'er wooded hill and flowery lea
Long summer days burn deathward silently,
One after one beneath the fiery dome
Of heaven;—I send you greeting o'er the foam
To show forgetfulness dwells not in me.

I pray you take my gift, and with it take
My love in many a thought you know not of,
And this small handful of mine idle rhymes;
And I would ask thus much for old times' sake,
And for the sake of memories we love,
That as you read you think of me sometimes.

A STAR'S MESSAGE.

STEADFAST I gaze on your small earth alway,
Ye sons of men, from my great throne on high ;
I see your wars that burst continually,
As kings grow clamorous for their human prey,
Or envy others that have mightier sway ;—
Ye think they shake the Universe,—but I—
I laugh to see you, who shall soon all die,
Set to with puny hands, and slay and slay.

Ye men, ye mortals on your tiny ball,—
Your lump of clay that spins in silent space,—
Think ye that if your little world did fall,
One star in heaven would miss it from its place ?
Live while ye may ! Soon, whatsoe'er ye do,
The great gods will forget your world and you.

DEATH AND LIFE.

I N my heart's temple I did build a shrine
Unto that god I dreaded ; there I bowed
In agony of prayer, and cried aloud
He was all-powerful, only he divine.
Death was the name of that grim god of mine ;
Nor found I of the mighty or the proud
One but did don his priestly garb, a shroud,
And taste at last his sacramental wine.

I worshipped in his temple faint with awe,
I hailed him god, most dreadful and most dire
Of all that men live wretched to cajole,—
Till the fierce day when close at hand I saw
Life's iron brow and lurid eyes of fire,—
And called on gentle Death to save my soul.

H E R P O R T R A I T .

O BYGONE Love, so dear when Life was young,
O bygone Life, by Love made sweet and fair,
A moment's space I breathe your purer air,
As tho' the impervious curtains Time hath hung
Over the Past, for one brief instant swung
Asunder, flooding all my heart's dark care
With the old gentle light of days that were
When Life's full current like a fountain sprung

In morning sunshine. Gracious glorious face,—
Clear eyes whose light knows nothing earthly now,—
You could look love well in the olden days,
And those mute lips of yours could kiss, I trow.
But now you have your life of prayer and praise,
And I the memory of an outworn vow.

CONSOLATION.

THE course of true love never smooth doth run :

The smoothest ways lead often to no goal ;
And troubles temper the courageous soul ;
Nought worth the doing without pain is done ;
Nought worth the winning without strife is won ;
And though Fate frown, defying our control,
Tho' the clouds gather and the thunders roll,
Endure, O Love, and day shall bring the sun.

Then at the end the rough dark pathway past,—
Where the flowers flame, and where the wild birds
call,—
No more at phantom fiends to stand aghast,
No more in thorny ways to grope and fall,—
But hand in hand, together at the last,
Shall we not find reward enough for all ?

THE END OF JANUARY.

THE first sweet promise of still sleeping spring,
Who, like a maiden upon her chaste bed,
Heaves lily breasts and turns her golden head
Once at some dream without awakening ;
In leafless trees the glad birds flit and sing,
From pallid skies a springtime gold is shed ;
Some fay with flowers has crowned stern Winter's head,
Until he dreams himself a youthful king,

And for a space of brief and sunny hours
Forgets his rod and rules with gentle sway,
And frees his captive Nature from her chain ;
But he shall throw aside his crown of flowers
Soon, and his mirth like them shall fade away,
And Nature feel his chain and rod again.



THE END OF AUGUST.

A BREATH of autumn chills the August air ;
Less music hath the murmur of the trees,
Whose leaves, brown-tinged, now wrestle with the
breeze

For each short hour of Life, and moan despair,
Sighing for gentler summer winds that were ;
There is no song or sound of birds or bees
At eventide, but gray mists haunt the leas
Like ghosts around the death-bed of the fair,

When glad life fails, and love and lust and mirth ;
O strew the flowers she loved upon her bier,
Who gave us corn and wine and royal cheer !—
One sweet thing more is passing from the earth,
And none can say if Spring shall rise next year,
Or dying Summer have again new birth.

LOVE AND SPRING.


I

I WALKED alone to-day, 'neath pallid skies,
On grass rain-rotten, with black moss ingrown,
By hedgerows whereon early Spring had sown
Specks of live green, foretelling braver guise;—
And leafless trees that clashed in wintry wise;—
Spring was scarce come, and Winter scarce was flown;
And 'twixt the two I wandered forth alone,
Holding commune with many memories.

The old love dethroned, the new love still uncrowned,—
The old life lived out, the glad new life begun,—
The many solaces my soul had found,
That yet was desolate in wanting one,—
And that one Love,—so mused I,—and around
The passionate Spring was waiting for the sun.

II.

Break thou the wintry chains that bind the land;
Yea, set once more Life's gathering torrent free!
Break, Love, the chilling bonds that fetter me,
Where in a barren flowerless space I stand,
'Twixt Winter passing and sweet Spring at hand!



Upon my soul, like morning on the sea,
Strikes the first shining silver shaft of thee,—
My heart is waiting now for thy command

To blossom into colour, odour, song!
Come with the sun, and let the earth and me
Together drink the prodigal Spring's delight,—
Together revel in her red and white,
Her songs and festivals and pageantry :—
Come, ye twin gods, for ye have tarried long.



E P I L O G U E .

AS sparks wind-whirled on high
That fall to earth again,
As flowers a day sees bloom and wane,
So fall they and so die ;
These offspring of my dreaming hours
Are ashes now and withered flowers.

Shall one these ashes rake ?
One stay at this rose-bed ?—
The fire is spent, the flowers are shed,—
And I that slept awake ;
And tho' in sleep I found them fair,
Now of all beauty they are bare.

Yet still I wait awhile ;—
With earnest eyes I gaze,
To see if one his face shall raise,
And turn to me and smile ;—
And list,—if haply there may be
One voice to answer unto me.

I watch with earnest eyes,
With eager ears I list ;—
I see the crowd as thro' a mist,
I hear their shouts and cries,—
Nought else ?—O soul, be still awhile,—
Is there an answer or a smile ?—





